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April 1, 1959 material

USSR

Berlin Air Corridor



A Soviet communication protesting the high-altitude flight of a U.S. C-130 aircraft between Frankfurt and Berlin on 27 March warns that any future incidents of this type could result in 'undesirable consequences' for which the U.S. would be "completely responsible." The USSR claims the altitude at which the plane was flying violated the regulations pertaining to guarantees of safety for flights in the corridors which were worked out in the course of many years of "practical experience." The Western position is that there is no ceiling in the Berlin air corridor.

Berlin

Khrushchev told West German Social Democratic leader Carlo Schmid in mid-March that nothing would happen regarding Berlin before a summit meeting, according to a usually reliable source. This is the most specific Soviet statement to date that the USSR does not intend to take unilateral action on Berlin before high-level East-West talks. The Soviet leaders will probably continue to avoid such specific statements in their public pronouncements, which are designed to maintain the threat of a sudden unilateral move as a means of bringing increasing pressure on the West. Khrushchev also told Schmid that the USSR will drop an "impregnable iron curtain" around Berlin if the U.S. moves even a single division toward the city.

YEMEN

Nasir's anti-Communist campaign has produced a "unanimous" reaction against the USSR and Qasim in Yemen, according to the Yemeni deputy foreign minister. Soviet personnel in Yemen have been insulted on the streets, and three Russian pilots were stoned by children in the capital. The Yemeni official also claimed that the Imam is attempting to limit the activities of both the Russians and the Communist Chinese in Yemen.

CUBA

The extent of Communist influence in Cuba was impressed on former Costa Rican President Figueres during his visit there last week.

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Figueres now definitely regards Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro as an opponent of the leftist non-Communist Latin American revolutionary movement represented by himself and Venezuelan President Betancourt. He expects serious political deterioration in Cuba, after which "anything can happen," including Communist domination.

GERMANY

In a conversation with the Acting Secretary yesterday, Couve de Murville contrasted British willingness to exhibit flexibility at the outset of negotiations with the USSR with the French feeling that the West must be tough. He added that our Berlin policy must be based on a manifest will to maintain our rights, and thought the period of maximum danger would come not now when a summit meeting is increasingly probable but "after the failure of the summit meeting" when the question would arise of what overt measures we should take to maintain our rights. Couve and the Acting Secretary agreed that the concept of disengagement as thus far presented by the British seemed vague and unsatisfactory. They agreed, however, that we should have some comprehensive package for the USSR which might include a "thinning out" of forces, but it should be made quite clear this package was inseparable. The British idea for a "new title" to Berlin was deemed an unsatisfactory substitute for our present clear rights. With regard to forthcoming tripartite talks, Couve said de Gaulle had two things in mind: tripartite coordination on global problems and NATO reorganization. Couve said France would present specific ideas on the latter problem after the former was settled.



HAMMARSKJOLD MOSCOW TRIP

HammarSKJOLD thinks it would be very sound for us to go to the UN before the USSR had tried to stop us from exercising our rights in Berlin. He thinks it desirable that he not be involved in a foreign ministers or summit meeting for as long as possible because, when the time comes, it would be best if he were to come in as freshly as possible and in an "expert" capacity.

TIBET

We have informed Embassy New Delhi we think the US should take no action with respect to Tibetan refugees which would diminish the effect

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the revolt appears to be having in India. We anticipate, however, that a future substantial influx might produce requests from the Indian Government or private charities for international assistance. We think any US aid should be provided indirectly to avoid giving the Indians the impression our interest is political rather than humanitarian. Consequently, we believe it should be granted in response to an Indian request. Possible media for making our contributions are: 1) international voluntary relief agencies; 2) Indian-owned PL 480 agricultural commodities diverted through the Indian Government or voluntary agencies; 3) International Red Cross channels; or 4) direct cash contributions to the Indian Government. We have requested the Embassy's estimate of the refugee influx and its views on approaches to India on the subject.



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